

Littletown – the Glass Farm

This is the latest installment in the history of Duxbury's Littletown section.

By Monty Healy
Clipper Contributor



By Lamont
"Monty" Healy

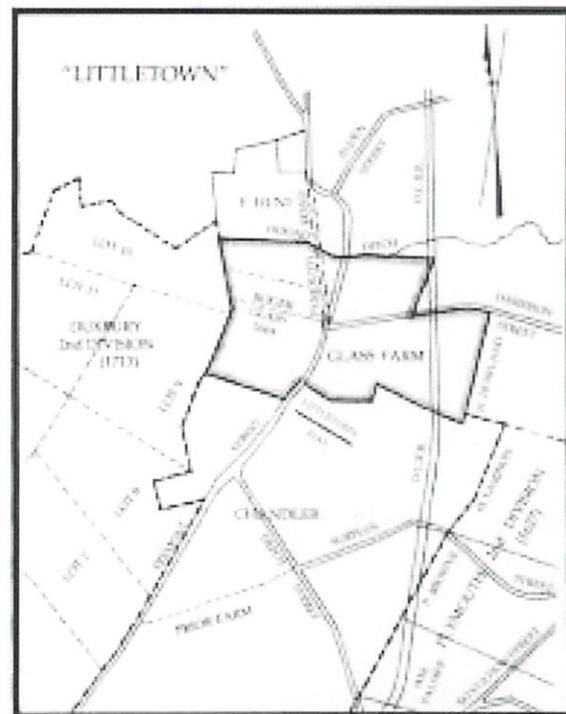
The first evidence we have of the Glass family being in Duxbury is found in indentured servant court documents from 1639. Accessing the family's genealogy through Ancestry reveals that James (1) and Mary (Cogan) Glass had 12 or 13 children. (Because there are three men named James Glass in this story, for clarity I'll number them.) Not all the children survived and although many did not come to America, at least four did. A history written in 1900 states that there is no record of anyone named Glass arriving on the ships that came to Plymouth and blamed it on the "poor" records. The only ship that did not have a passenger list was the Fortune (1621) and there were not that many passengers onboard, most being family members of the original settlers. Since it was unlikely that the Glass family was here in 1621, my guess is that the siblings landed in Salem or Boston.

James Glass Jr; Roger Glass; Henry Glass and Amey Glass were all indentured servants. James Jr. (2) (1620- 1652) was apprenticed to Mr. Henry Barnes of Barnstable, but the court reassigned him to Manassah Kempton who was married to Julianna Carpenter Morton, Gov. Bradford's sister-in-law. Significantly, Manassah was one of the grantees of the 10-acre lots in Littletown, which may have been the reason James Jr. (2) settled in that neighborhood of Duxbury.

James Jr. (2) later married Mary Pontus (1645). The couple had three daughters who lived to adulthood and married. Unfortunately, James drowned in Plymouth Bay, off of Gurnet Point, in 1652 at age 32. Because the daughters, in keeping with the times, took their respective husbands' surnames, there are no people with the surname Glass descended from James Jr. (2). His widow married Philip Delano.

Brother Roger Glass (1623-1692) had a similar experience when he was apprenticed to John Crocker and then reassigned to John Whetcomb. I don't believe that the Glass boys were difficult, but rather that they might have been treated harshly.

Brother Henry was apprenticed in Plymouth, but may have died young, and we don't know much about sister Amey's early life. She did reach adulthood and married Richard Dwelley and had eight children in the 1680s and '90s.



The Glass Farm is nestled among other 17th century Duxbury properties

One of Littletown's earliest farms was the Glass Farm, which was started by a deed from Constant Southworth (Gov. Bradford's stepson) to Roger Glass on March 31, 1664. Southworth had acquired the property from William Brett who had acquired it from John Tisdale, the original grantee in the late 1620s or '30s.

Since James Jr. (2) did not have any boys, Henry probably died as a young boy, and Amey married Richard Dwelley and therefore her three boys and five girls had the Dwelley last name, this leaves Roger as the progenitor of most Glass descendants in Duxbury. Roger married Mary Launder and they had five or seven children.

There were several members of the Glass family who fought in the French and Indian Wars (1689-1697 King William's War and 1702-1713 Queen Anne's War), the Revolution and the War of 1812. Veterans were granted land for their service in the French and Indian Wars. Roger's son James (3) (1648-1691) died in the 1690 Battle of Quebec. In 1765, the State of Massachusetts granted land in Turner, Maine, to soldiers who served in the Battle of Quebec—75 years too late. James Glass (3) and Samuel Dwelley, by that time deceased, were given land in Turner and in New Gloucester, Maine. The two towns are fairly close to Lewiston, Turner to the north and New Gloucester to the south.

Turner, notably, was named after the Rev. Charles Turner, the minister of the First Parish Church in Duxbury (1755-1776). He resigned because of "ill health," but many believed, at the time, that he was a Loyalist (Tory). He had been preaching to a half empty house in Duxbury, but became quite popular in Maine telling Duxbury stories. The descendants of James (3), especially Ezekiel and his brother Consider, moved their families to New Gloucester where there were Bradfords, Winslows, Chandlers and Dwelleys. Maine was part of Massachusetts until 1820. Other parts of the Glass family moved to the Island Creek area. Just north of the Christian Science Reading Room, is Glass Terrace, a development of property that was owned by a Glass descendant.

The Glass farm on the plan shows the first parcel that was acquired by Roger Glass on the west side of what is now Tremont Street, opposite the present Harrison Street that was deeded to him by Constant Southworth, Gov. Bradford's stepson in 1664. Then the Glass family acquired the 30-odd-acre property south of Harrison Street and east of Roger's first parcel.

Roger's son, John, bought the parcel on the north side of Harrison at Tremont from Emanuel Freeman in 1798, making the farm about 70 or 80 acres, although by that time they had been selling off portions of the farm to the Bradfords and Freemans. The family occupied the Glass farm for about 125 years.

Two things that should be taken into consideration when looking at the Glass property James Glass (2) was apprenticed to Manassah Kempton, who was married to Julianna (Carpenter) Morton, Gov. Bradford's sister-in-law and that might have led to a close relationship with the Bradfords, and they (the Kemptons) were probably close to James (2) when he drowned at the age of 32.

That premature death may be the reason that several descendants were named James.

The second concern I had is that I believe that the road (Tremont Street) was considerably to the west of its current location and that would complicate some of the abutting ownerships (see sketch). You should also note that we now have a street named Littletown Way, just south of the Glass farm, which serves to recognize the neighborhood name.

When we are covering the farms of Glass and Freeman, and the Bradford property, we should understand that they transferred property between each other. So, parts of the Glass farm became part of the Freeman Farm and the Bradford property.